LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL: CHOICE OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY BY GRADE 13 STUDENTS*

The Problem

The University of Waterloo, like most of its sister institutions in the province, rejects more student applications than it accepts. This is particularly the case in high profile programmes such as Engineering, Mathematics, and Architecture. However, although there is no shortage of qualified applicants, attracting the most qualified applicants is more difficult. Yet this is essential if universities are to maintain high academic standards and reduce attrition caused by students dropping out because of poor academic performance.

There has been some concern recently that qualified students who would do well at Waterloo fail to include this university as one of their UCCA choices. There is also concern that well-qualified students who do select Waterloo and are offered a place here subsequently turn down this offer in favour of another institution. The present study primarily addresses the first of these questions, although some of the evidence collected may also shed light on the second.

Similar issues have been investigated by the Council for Ontario Universities and by some individual institutions or faculties. The COU study established that approximately 20% of qualified Grade 13 applicants to Ontario universities in Fall 1983 did not in fact register at the institutions offering them a place. A second stage of this study, now underway, is surveying these individuals to find out their reasons for not entering university and what they choose to do instead. At the University of Toronto, the Subcommittee on Admissions and Awards issued a report on recruitment and admissions in May 1983, based upon a detailed study of a sample of first-year Toronto students. The investigation examined images of the University as well as student experiences during the admissions and recruitment process and in their first year at the institution. Closer to home, the University of Waterloo Faculty of Science carried out a survey of its first-year students in May 1984 that probed factors prompting students to apply to Waterloo and examined subsequent experiences at the University. Another recent (April 1984) survey by the Ontario Universities Registrars' Association focussed on one particular aspect of the recruitment process -- the Universities Information Programme (UIP). Over 2,000 high school students were questionned concerning the sources of information they had used in selecting a university, including UIP.

The Waterloo Study: Methodology

All these studies bear upon the concerns of the present investigation. However, the way they tackled the question of student choice of institution is rather different from the methodology employed here. For example, two of the studies were limited to a particular institution or faculty, and surveyed students a year into their university programmes. The UIP survey did question high school students, but was limited to an examination of sources of information used in the selection process, particularly UIP itself. The COU study presently underway is broad in scope, but focusses primarily on students who choose not to enter university from high school.

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The present study was carried out with Grade 13 students who are in the process of deciding about their career after leaving school -- whether to enter higher education, travel for a year, and so on. Because of the relative lack of data about students' motivations and attitudes in making decisions about what to do after leaving school, it was felt that a conventional, quantitative survey involving individual questionnaires or interviews with fixed response alternatives would probably yield misleading results. Instead it was decided to hold group discussions in a selection of schools across southwestern Ontario, followed by interviews with the school guidance counsellors. In response to our telephone request, counsellors arranged one or more group discussion sessions, involving from eight to twelve Grade 13 students, if possible selected so as to give a representative cross-section of school leavers, including those who had applied to university, those intending to go to college, and students who intended to do neither. Naturally we had no direct control over the way these students were recruited; in all cases they were volunteers, but in some schools the groups were selected at the last minute by the expedient of the counsellor going into the library or cafeteria, while in other cases students had signed up several days in advance.

Group sessions were led by Knapper and Shalinsky, and neither teachers nor guidance counsellors were present, except sometimes to make introductions. Sessions generally lasted from forty minutes to an hour, and were conducted very informally although following a set pattern that was guided by the interviewers. The students introduced themselves and briefly outlined their plans after leaving school; they then were asked to explain the basis for their choice (e.g. of college versus university versus taking a job). Those who had elected to study at a particular institution were asked to describe how they had made this selection -- in terms of both the processes they had gone through and the factors underlying their choice of college/university and programme of study. The discussions ended with students giving their impressions of different Ontario universities, including Waterloo.

Although this seems a rather simplistic process, in fact the discussions were in most cases very full, and often continued informally after the officially-scheduled end of the session. The interviewers attempted to ensure that a wide variety of viewpoints was expressed, and that each student had the opportunity to clarify his own attitudes and perceptions in the light of differing views put forward by others. Another important feature of the method was that the precise purpose of the interview was not mentioned at the outset. Counsellors who recruited the groups were briefed to say only that the discussions were part of a research project to examine student career choice. The identification of the interviewers with Waterloo was not mentioned until the end of the session, and indeed the Waterloo connection was downplayed for most of the interview in an attempt to understand the more general factors underlying student choice of post-secondary institution.

The method is comparable to the idea of "focussed group interviews" practised by a number of polling organisations (such as Goldfarb). Results from such interviews cannot be interpreted in quantitative terms (i.e. that x% of students go to Y University for z reason), but they do serve as a useful basis for describing the general motivational and attitudinal factors involved in student choice of university or college. As such they are of some value in themselves, as well as being an essential basis for subsequent, more conventional opinion surveys.

The Sample

In all there were eleven discussion sessions in six different high schools, and a total of 93 students took part. Schools were selected with the help of UW's High School Liaison Office and were intended to represent areas of southwestern Ontario that typically send significant numbers of students to the University of Waterloo. The locations chosen were Kitchener-Waterloo (Waterloo Collegiate Institute, Forest Heights Collegiate Institute), Hamilton (Southmount Secondary School), Willowdale (Northview Heights Secondary School), Mississauga (Thomas L. Kennedy Collegiate Institute), Woodstock (Woodstock Secondary School) and Meaford (Georgian Bay Secondary School). The schools in Meaford and Woodstock were deliberately included to represent locations without a university or college in the immediate vicinity. Since an important determinant of student choice of institution is physical proximity and the opportunity to attend college or university without leaving home, it was felt important to survey the attitudes of students who could not count upon the availability of post-secondary education in their home town. Despite the attempt to choose a broad range of high schools, this sample of schools cannot of course be taken to be truly representative of all those provincial high schools that send students to Waterloo.

Students' Plans After Leaving School

Of the 93 students who took part in the sessions, the greatest number (54) intended to enter university next year, with a further 25 planning to go to community college (most of the latter had already been accepted in the programme of their choice). A further eight students intended to take jobs, five needed to do more work to complete Grade 13, and one student planned to travel for a year. Students' selection of college or university was clearly affected by the proximity of and familiarity with higher education institutions. In the case of college-bound students, virtually all planned to attend a college in the immediate vicinity. Students also apparently selected universities largely on the basis of their closeness to home: of the sixteen institutions to which students had applied, only two were outside Ontario, and the pattern of choices for the remainder reflected a desire for many students to attend the local university (see Appendix 1). The two most popular institutions were the Universities of Toronto and Waterloo: Waterloo was listed on the UCCA application by 25 students, and Toronto by 22: Toronto attracted a total of 15 first choices, and Waterloo 14. Because of the way the schools were selected, however, it is likely that these data exaggerate the popularity of Waterloo among Grade 13 students across the province.

Community College versus University

In all groups there was a lively discussion about the relative merits of a university education as opposed to a community college course. One fairly obvious determinant was the availability of a specific course or programme at a particular institution: perhaps surprisingly, nearly all students appeared to have a fairly clear idea of what they wished to study, even though this was often largely determined by the subjects they had taken at high school, rather than any far-ranging consideration of course and career options. Students planning to enter college generally saw as advantages the fact that the education offered was practical and led directly to a specific career, courses were relatively cheap and short, and it was nearly always possible to attend college while living at home. A few students mentioned that colleges were academically less demanding than universities, or had lower admission requirements. However, this did not seem to

be a major factor for most participants.

It was interesting that, when faced with these arguments in defence of attending college, very few university-bound students responded with reasons that stressed such factors as a deeper, more theoretical understanding of a discipline, the greater challenge of university courses, or the opportunity to get a broad ("liberal") education that would extend beyond the realms of a particular discipline. Instead, many students defended the university on the grounds that it provided just as much practical experience as a college (co-op programmes were mentioned specifically in this regard), and led to even better jobs, primarily because of the extra status and prestige of the university degree or (in a few cases) the chance to go on to graduate work. Despite some concerns about employment prospects and the dangers of becoming "overqualified", the majority of students had quite clear expectations that a university graduate could expect to get a better, more interesting job, earn more money, advance more rapidly in his or her career, and move more easily from one job to another. (These findings underscore the results of a study of changing student values between 1967 and 1983, carried out by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA, which showed an increasing preoccupation with financial security, at the expense of more altruistic and socially concerned motivations.)

Some students specifically mentioned the need for future citizens to have a more general education in view of the rapid obsolescence of many traditional professions. However this was a minority view, and contrasted with the more widely held belief of most college-bound students that learning the "tools of the trade" in a practical short course was the best passport to employment in economically troubled times. Underlying students' views of university was a fairly firmly-rooted (even among college-bound students) notion that a university -- and a university degree -- conveyed prestige. This idea appears to be passed on by teachers and guidance counsellors (themselves university graduates) and by parents -- even those who had never attended university.

Reasons for selecting university were, then, overwhelmingly based upon pragmatic considerations of economics and career choice. Only a very few students mentioned other factors. These included the chance to live away from home, the opportunity for an interesting social life, the ability to transfer easily between academic programmes, and the chance to take time to decide on future plans for students whose professional goals and academic interests were not entirely clear. Similar reasons also prompted some students to "drop out" for a year (for example to travel abroad), and some of the small number of students planning to take a job after Grade 13 said that they would perhaps eventually enter university or college once they had a firmer notion of future career plans.

Selecting a Particular Institution

In addition to asking students why they were entering college or university, the sessions also probed in some detail how they went about making these decisions. Information on this process was also sought from the guidance counsellors.

Key sources of information. Students used both formal and informal information sources to select a post-secondary institution and programme of study. In the former category the school guidance department plays a crucial role. It makes available written material on universities and colleges (e.g. calendars),

counsels students on an individual basis, arranges for visits to institutions, hosts the University Information Programme, and offers vocational and aptitude testing, including the new computer-based CHOICES system, which combines vocational and aptitude advice with information about relevant programmes offered in a wide range of North American institutions. In some cases students sought out information on their own, or with the help of parents, without going through the guidance office -- for example visiting university departments or sending or phoning for brochures and calendars.

Informal sources of information probably play at least as great a role in the selection process. It seems clear that many students wish to go to the institution where their friends will be, and former schoolmates returning home from universities also appear to play an important role in fostering institutional images. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons why school "traditions" arise of sending large numbers of students to particular universities. Most students denied that their parents had any influence on choice of a particular university. However, it was clear that the prestige of certain institutions exerts a subtle pressure on student choice, and it seems likely that parental preference for particular universities might also play a role, even if students may not want to admit it. Some group members mentioned individual teachers as a source of information and influence on selection though, perhaps surprisingly, they appeared to play a rather small role compared to other factors. Nonetheless, teachers undoubtedly play a part in formulating students' views of their discipline and related career prospects: in this sense they probably have a greater influence on choice of programme (and, indirectly, institution) than most students acknowledge.

The decision-making process. Despite the existence in many schools of all the apparatus for helping students to make systematic and well-informed decisions about choosing an institution and programme, it was apparent from the discussions that in many cases the student selection process was haphazard and poorly informed. For example, many students did not take advantage of the chance to meet with a guidance counsellor in Grade 12 or go through the process of vocational and aptitude testing. Only a minority of students took the trouble to attend the University Information Programme evening (though those who did seemed to find it quite informative). Although many students go on institutional visits, their selection of particular universities or colleges is often not very broad, and it is not clear that they know how to make the most of the information available at the institutions concerned. Nearly all students are exposed to literature available in the school guidance office, but they are often remarkably maladept at interpreting the information -- especially the rather confusing calendar descriptions of programme options and requirements. In these circumstances it seems plausible that the informal influences referred to above (school tradition, influence of friends, etc.) may play a major role. As mentioned earlier the factors of institutional proximity and availability of particular programmes are of major importance for most students. A combination of such factors means that it is probably very difficult to encourage students to enroll in unfamiliar universities or programmes -- despite the attempts in systems such as CHOICES to broaden the range of institutional/programme options considered by potential applicants.

Pressures. Although not usually fully acknowledged by students, a number of pressures appeared to affect many of their decisions. These included financial pressure to live at home and commute to college or university; on the whole, preference to attend an institution in one's home town (or at least generally familiar surroundings) was much greater than any desire to explore new territory

by entering a university in a remote part of the province or (heaven forbid) outside Ontario. Financial considerations seemed often to be linked with parental influence: as mentioned above, many parents attach great prestige to attending university, and it seems likely that they probably exert subtle pressure for students to select particular institutions and programmes. Finally, students were certainly influenced by the "reputation" of particular universities and colleges, although it is not clear from what sources of evidence these images were derived. The impressions were also extremely localised in the sense that few students had very many views on institutions that were not reasonably close by.

Concerns. As mentioned above, an overriding concern in the selection process is the rather whimsical way in which it currently takes place, despite considerable efforts on the part of institutions and schools to provide appropriate information and guidance. In the context of this very general concern the discussions revealed a number of more specific problems affecting the selection process. The information provided by universities was seen as confusing by many students, especially calendar information relating to course requirements (college calendars were perceived to be much more comprehensible). Many informants said that the calendars were too difficult to interpret and that they would prefer to see some more general information about faculties and programmes that included descriptions of typical courses and what they entailed, how courses are combined together to form a degree programme, career prospects related to the discipline, and so on. In the case of Waterloo the various brochures provided in the WATBOX are intended to serve precisely this need, yet although the WATBOX was prominently displayed in every guidance department we visited, students had either failed to consult it properly or had forgotten what they had found there.

Nor is it clear that the information derived from the UIP or the various open days and other organised institutional visits serves to remedy students' uncertainty about what different programmes entail. Although both UIP and visits were seen by those attending them (guidance counsellors and students) as useful, they also appear to have some negative features -- even if these were referred to very politely. In the case of the UIP, for Grade 13 students the information often came too late to be of use, since the school was often visited after students had already made their selection of a programme and institution. (Although students could -- and some did -- attend in Grade 12, in this case the information possibly comes a little too early.) Experience with high school visits appeared to be mixed: there was a genuine interest in actually seeing the institution at work, but sometimes frustration with the lack of opportunity to really get a feel for what it would be like to enroll in a particular programme at the institution concerned. Just taking a walking tour around the grounds or labs was seen by some students as having limited value; on the other hand the opportunity to sit in on classes and talk to students and faculty was welcomed. At the same time, there were some quite marked negative reactions to particular student guides who, according to reports from some group members, spent a good deal of the time saying how difficult it was to survive in first-year, how onerous the workload was, how boring the classes, and so on. (We subsequently managed to get some partial corroboration that this has occurred on some occasions at Waterloo.)

A related concern with respect to Waterloo was the impression that its programmes in Mathematics and Engineering -- while highly prestigious and desirable -- were simply too difficult to get into. In particular, many students decided not to apply to Waterloo (or not put Waterloo as first choice) because their marks were below those provided as cut-off points for previous years. It

seems clear that these cut-off marks were interpreted as more rigid than they are actually intended to be: most students (and counsellors) saw the marks as absolute minima for admission to the programmes concerned. When it was mentioned that the cut-offs were provided from last year's data and were intended only as rough guides, one counsellor said that it was to be expected they would underestimate the actual required mark in view of the increasing competition for university places each year. Students also appear to believe that virtually the only admission criterion is marks, and few students appreciate that many departments and faculties are concerned with other qualities, such as range of interests, motivation and initiative, etc.

Images of Universities

Students were asked to give their perceptions of a number of universities, and it possible to provide capsule pictures of the major provincial institutions. Waterloo was identified very much with its co-operative programmes, its excellent equipment and facilities, especially in Engineering and Computer Science, and was seen as providing practical experience and good job prospects on graduation. The general reputation of Waterloo was thought to be high, although vey few students knew much about programmes outside Mathematics and Engineering. The newness and size of the university provoked mixed reactions: some thought it rather monolithic, but most compared it favourably with Toronto in this respect. Waterloo had a general reputation of being hard to get into because of high academic standards and limited places (once again students were primarily referring to programmes in Engineering and Mathematics). The various competitions and contests (e.g. SIN and Descartes) were quite well known among students in the relevant disciplines and clearly did much to draw favourable attention to the institution.

Images of Toronto largely reflect impressions recorded in the recent report of that university's Working Group on Recruitment and Admissions (referred to above). It had a high profile but was seen as huge, crowded, impersonal and snooty. Some students, however, saw Toronto's location as an advantage, and others pointed out that by affiliating with one of the colleges it was possible to cope with the vast scale and lack of interpersonal contact. The University of Western Ontario seemed to be especially well known to oriental (e.g. Hong Kong) students: it was associated very much with business administration and viewed as having a good reputation, despite the fact that it was perceived to have generally lower admission requirements than either Toronto or Waterloo. Guelph was liked for its location and diversity of programmes (perhaps indicating that no one programme stood out for these students). York was admired for its smaller classes, less intimidating atmosphere (compared to Toronto) and programmes in business; on the other hand York's location was seen as especially difficult to reach, even for many Toronto-based students, and its general academic reputation was not perceived to be as high as many other provincial universities. Several other institutions were also discussed, but the numbers of students providing information about them was too small to warrant mention here.

The Views of Guidance Counsellors

Although guidance counsellors did not participate in the group discussion sessions, they were interviewed individually and asked about the same themes discussed with students. All the counsellors reported good rapport with Waterloo personnel, and had favourable impressions of the university, especially its co-

operative progammes and its pleasant and convenient location. With some exceptions, it was clear that guidance counsellors generally favoured the universities over colleges -- which is hardly surprising in view of the fact that they were all themselves university graduates. Furthermore, the positive impression they held of Waterloo is probably partly accounted for by the way the schools were selected for interviews (nominated by the High School Liaison Office on the basis of good contacts with the counsellors concerned). There were very few complaints about the information and services provided by Waterloo with respect to admission and recruitment. Minor quibbles were (from one informant) that high school visits to Waterloo were difficult to arrange on an individual school basis due to problems in setting up a suitable itinerary, parking problems, difficulties in finding one's way about the campus, and so on. A number of informants also mentioned that the university's Open House took place at an inconvenient time of the year: a better time might be the Fall. Although Waterloo was regarded very favourably by the counsellors, it was clear that the image was largely restricted to the high-profile disciplines within Engineering and Mathematics: very few informants placed much stress on programmes outside these areas and may have been less familiar with their admission requirements, academic content and job prospects.

Not surprisingly, the counsellors reported that Waterloo is also seen in a favourable light by their students. They confirmed the impression that many students select a university on the basis of remarkably scanty data, and frequently fail to take advantage of the considerable range of information that is potentially available to them, either in written form, through visits, or by means of interviews with counsellors themselves. Naturally, guidance personnel believe strongly in the value of personal contact between counsellor and student -- despite the move to more automated guidance systems such as CHOICES. While the value of face-to-face guidance is obvious, exclusive reliance on personal counselling places a considerable burden on high school guidance departments in terms of the amount of information they must keep at their finger-tips concerning the many different institutions, programmes within them, and the way these best relate to different student aptitudes and interests.

The complaints about the stress on high standards and confusion caused by cut-off marks, especially in Computer Science, Engineering and Accounting, have already been discussed above, as has the unfavourable impression produced on some high school visits by "arrogant" student guides. In contrast to the over-reliance on the admissions standards set by cut-off marks in some programmes, there was occasional vagueness about the requirements for other, lesser-known programmes outside Engineering and Mathematics.

Finally, a number of the counsellors stressed that the decision-making process begins long before Grade 13, and that universities should direct their attention to students at least in Grade 12, and possibly as early as Grade 11, who are gradually formulating plans about particular institutions, programmes, and careers.

Some Conclusions and Recommendations

As mentioned at the beginning of the report, the results of this study cannot be taken as firm quantitative evidence about the extent to which particular opinions or concerns are held by Ontario high school students. Such views undoubtedly exist, but it cannot be certain how commonly they may be shared. To establish valid data of this type it would be necessary to conduct a larger study,

with more careful sampling of respondents, and precisely worded questions based upon the issues and attitudes identified in the present investigation. With that caveat in mind, the following conclusions and suggestions are tentatively put forward.

Major reasons for selecting particular institutions appear to be the rather mundane factors of proximity and familiarity. Hence for Waterloo to attract students from more distant locations or from new types of high schools, ways must be found to direct attention to Waterloo's advantages -- possibly through admissions and recruitment publicity sent to the schools and linked to some of the extensive favourable media coverage the university has received in the recent past. Few universities appear to make use of external news stories in their publications, yet the information conveyed by these "objective" sources may be more credible to the general public than self-serving statements on posters or university-generated publicity material. (There is also no reason why a similar approach could not be adopted for "local" students, who should not of course be neglected in any search to attract new students.)

Other sources of public relations that have already proved highly successful in the past are the various departmental or faculty activities related to the high schools, such as contests, publications like Chem 13 News, and similar initiatives. Such approaches could be extended to other areas of the university. In this regard it must be mentioned that avenues of publicity of the type described above are likely to be more successful for the "high profile" programmes of the university than for the lesser-known departments in Arts, Environmental Studies, and HKLS. This is not to say that these areas are bereft of achievements, merely to point out that they receive considerably less media attention. It would seem worthwhile for more departments to emulate the successful initiatives mentioned above to forge links between the relevant disciplines and the high school community -- teachers and students. Indeed, some attempts have been made, but further efforts could well pay dividends in goodwill and increased applications.

Universities are still seen by the public as institutions that convey prestige and offer a passport to a good career and financial prosperity (versus the short-term benefits of a college education). At the same time such ideas are under continual threat -- for example by media stories of unemployed graduates -- and publicity material would do well to reinforce the value of a university education, both in terms of pragmatic factors (ability to enter a career of choice) and more "philosophical" considerations (obtaining a broad education, life satisfaction, etc.).

Many students -- especially outside Mathematics and Engineering -- appear to be uncertain about the advantages of a university education in relation to future career prospects. University publicity might stress that a university degree does lead to enhanced employment opportunities, and might also point out the benefits of a broader (compared with college) education that will allow for possible shifting of careers in the future. Faculties such as Arts and Environmental Studies should probably provide more information about the sorts of job opportunities available, and draw attention to the evidence concerning the career/life satisfaction enjoyed by such graduates.

Waterloo is very much associated in the minds of many potential students with certain areas (primarily Mathematics and Engineering) and with a particular approach to undergraduate education (co-op). These are strengths that should continue to be exploited. At the same time their high profile may detract from

other aspects of the univesity's programmes, and every effort should be made to communicate to potential students the very wide range of options available at this university.

The University should carefully consider the appropriate balance between its reputation for very high academic standards and its desire to encourage as many students as possible to apply. Information about minimum admission standards in particular programmes is likely to be interpreted quite literally by potential applicants; hence publicity about "cut-off points", for example, should be communicated with care to avoid discouraging marginal students who might in fact gain admission and do well in the programme concerned. Teachers and guidance counsellors should be briefed very carefully on the meaning of these guidelines. In addition, departments and faculties should make clear to students whether or not marks constitute the only criterion for admission. If not, then the additional criteria -- and the ways in which students might fulfill them -- should be clearly explained.

Although the school guidance departments are the major source of information about university programmes and admission procedures, it is likely that many students do not use these facilities fully or properly, and some students may even distrust the guidance department. For these reasons it may be important to provide opportunities for direct communication between students and the university so that, if necessary, they can obtain needed information in written form (short handouts were mentioned as desirable), by a telephone call to a department, a personal visit, etc. This is already done in some instances, but the process could be made more systematic and made known to potential students, counsellors, and parents.

Open days and high school visits to campus are a valuable source of information for many students, but they can also be counter-productive unless handled carefully. Efforts should be made to expose visitors to a broad range of university activities -- especially those related to teaching -- and care should be taken to avoid misinformation about programmes and the "ambience" prevailing in the faculty or department. Students who desire it should have the chance to discuss particular questions or concerns with a faculty member.

Other ways of forging links with local students might be explored. For example, some students reported using a university library to study, and in one institution this is actually encouraged. Waterloo might consider making some of its local facilities available to students on a limited basis and at selected times.

Although UIP is seen as useful, some consideration might be given to holding the visits in the Fall instead of Winter term. It should also be recognised that the UIP format has some limitations from the point of view of providing precise information about particular programmes. Students considering coming to Waterloo could possibly be provided with a list of faculty contact persons in each department who might be approached in advance (by phone or letter) for more detailed information about their chosen programme and for help with planning a fruitful visit.

It is possible that alumni could be used to publicise the university or even to give information and advice about specific faculties and programmes. This would of course require special training and regular briefings. Similarly, selected students might be used to provide information and advice to other students from

their former high school; once again, proper preparation and briefing would be essential.

Despite the heroic work of the High School Liaison Office, rank and file faculty have a key role to play in the links to high schools, in particular since they are intimately familiar with their departments and the details of programmes and courses. Even greater involvement of faculty may be needed in such activities as UIP, and campus visits by groups and individuals, not to mention the various "outreach" activities involving publications, contests, etc.

In many cases parents probably play a crucial role in influencing the process of selecting a university or programme, and ways might be explored of involving them more directly with Waterloo, perhaps by special publications, or by more encouragement to visit the campus, either with the potential applicant or under some other auspices (visits by service clubs and similar organisations are one possibility).

Although the strength of its academic programmes is rightly seen as the major factor attracting students to select Waterloo, other considerations -- such as the physical environment, availability of accommodation, teaching methods, class size, and quality of social life on campus -- also play a part, and deserve mention in the University's publicity materials.

A good deal of the reputation of Waterloo derives from research and entrepreneurial activities. However, potential students are naturally concerned primarily with the character and quality of teaching and learning in the various programmes. The distinctive advantages of co-op are already widely recognised, but it should also be possible to stress other types of learning experiences that students seem to value highly, such as the project work that is a feature in many departments, the availability of "state of the art" lab equipment, and the chance to interact with faculty members in seminars and tutorials -- in contrast to the impersonality of huge classes that many students condemn.

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STUDENT CHOICE OF UNIVERSITY BY HIGH SCHOOL

	Toronto	Waterloo	Guelph	Wilfrid Laurier	Western	York	Carleton	McMaster	Queen's	Laurentian	Lakehead	Trent	Brock	out of province	Windsor	Ottawa
Waterloo C.I.																
1st choice	1	2		1									1			
2nd choice		1		2	1											
3rd choice			1			1										
Northview Heights S.S.																
1st choice	4	1			2	3										
2nd choice	2					2							1			
3rd choice							2									
Southmount S.S.																
1st choice	2	2					1	2		1						
2nd choice		1					1	1								
3rd choice																
Woodstock S.S.																
1st choice			1	1	2				1							1
2nd choice	1	1		2	1								1			
3rd choice																
Forest Heights C.I.																
1st choice		5		1						1					1	
2nd choice		2	1					2								1
3rd choice			1	2												
Thomas L. Kennedy C.I.																
1st choice	6	3						1								
2nd choice	3	3			1			2	1							1
3rd choice	1				3	1		4								
Georgian Bay S.S.																
1st choice	1	2	2		1						1					
2nd choice				2	1	1		1		1		1				
3rd choice		2		1	3				1							
TOTALS	21	25	6	12	15	8	4	13	3	2	1	1	1	3	1	3